E/AC.70/1995/NGO/6
3 May 1995

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ON THE REVIEW
OF ARRANGEMENTS FOR CONSULTATIONS WITH
NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS
Second session
8-12 May 1995
Item 2 of the provisional agenda*

GENERAL REVIEW OF ARRANGEMENTS FOR CONSULTATIONS WITH NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Statement submitted by the American Association of Retired Persons, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, category II

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraph 10 of the annex to Economic and Social Council resolution 1993/80.

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I. CONSULTATIVE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

1. Introductory remarks in the proposed draft resolution (E/AC.70/1995/CRP.1), although informative as a background piece, are not appropriate as part of a resolution. No introductory remarks were made in the annex to Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV); therefore, it is unnecessary to include them in the proposed resolution.

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* E/AC.70/1995/1.

II. ARRANGEMENTS FOR CONSULTATION WITH NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Section 1, proposed paragraph 10

2. Inclusion of organizations that accept members designated by governmental authorities raises some concern. Even though the proposed wording stipulates that "... provided that such membership does not interfere with the free expression of views of the organization," this provision may be difficult to monitor. There appears to be no mechanism in place to monitor this type of representation.

Section 1, proposed paragraph 11

3. The language in this paragraph restricts individual organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council in their relations with the United Nations. The concept of a joint committee would be impossible to manage or enforce. There is no mechanism to adjudicate whether organizations should or should not form a joint committee, or whether or not organizations have similar objectives, interests and basic views in a given field.

Section 1, proposed paragraph 15

4. This proposed paragraph should be rejected and paragraph 9 of 1296 retained. The original text of 1296 provides for national organizations to gain consultative status after consultation with the member State concerned, where they have special experience upon which the Council may wish to draw. The process described in 1296, that is, "in consultation with the Member State concerned," should be retained; the proposed wording "save in exceptional cases" limits the special expertise that should be made available to the United Nations.

Section 3, proposed paragraph 25

5. Of the three options proposed, option 1 corresponds most closely to the category I, category II and Roster system established in 1296. However, the increasing diversity among non-governmental organizations makes it difficult, if not impossible, to classify organizations as either general or special. As an example, the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) is an international non-governmental organization with a national focus, primarily because the majority of its members are citizens of the United States of America. As international membership increases, however, its programmes and activities will change to reflect that membership.

6. Since AARP has made substantive and sustained contributions to the achievement of the objectives of the United Nations in various regions of the world, it would appear that AARP would be classified as general. At the same time, AARP has special competence in the field of ageing issues and is known internationally and regionally for this competence, which would indicate classification as special.

7. These examples are put forth to illustrate the complexity of categorizing a growing number of non-governmental organizations that are reflective of a changing world. It would be the AARP's recommendation to retain the category I, category II, and Roster system rather than enter into another confusing classification system.

Section 4, proposed paragraph 30

8. The proposed wording to supplement attendance arrangements with modalities of participation, such as hearings, round tables, panel discussions, seminars, government dialogues with non-governmental organizations and other mechanisms, is acceptable as long as those arrangements are intended to be supplementary to and not a substitute for attendance as authorized representatives at public meetings.

VII. PARTICIPATION OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES CONVENED BY THE UNITED NATIONS AND THEIR PREPARATORY PROCESS

9. As to participation in international conferences, it should be stated that those non-governmental organizations already in consultative status shall automatically be accredited to United Nations conferences.